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S. R.

EMBASSY OF PORTUGAL
CANBERRA

C/GM/108

29 April 1986

Dear Senator McIntosh,

I am pleased to enclose a letter from the Portuguese Prime Minister, Professor Cavaco Silva, of 19 March 1986, to you, answering your letter of 30 January 1986.

Yours sincerely,

I. Rebello de Andrade
Ambassador

Senator
Gordon Douglas McIntosh
The Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA

PRESIDÊNCIA DO CONSELHO DE MINISTROS

Gabinete do Primeiro Ministro

Lisbon, March 19, 1986

Dear Senator McIntosh

I have the honour of acknowledging receipt of your letter dated the 30th of January 1986 on the question of East Timor. In this respect I would like to assure you that the Portuguese Government carries on with its efforts to achieve a just and dignified solution for this problem.

Perhaps I could quote the Programme of the Government in what concerns East Timor:

"As it is its duty, the Government will do everything with the view of finding a global solution to the problem of East Timor; namely by giving its full support to the mandate of the Secretary General of the United nations and favouring the continuation of the ongoing contacts under his auspices.

The establishement of conditions allowing the timorese people to exercise its right to self-determination, the preservation of its specifc ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity, and the improvement of the humanitarian situation in the territory, are objectives of the Government."

His Excellency
Senator for Western Australia
Gordon D. McIntosh

With reference to your questions I would like to inform you of the following:

a) when the statements that you refer to, made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Prof. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, were known in Lisbon, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs issued the following press release on the 14th of November 1985:

"As it is known, the Portuguese authorities act within the framework of the United Nations, and within the scope of the specific mandate of its Secretary General. This action aims at the achievement of a global solution to the question os East Timor. For Portugal, the aspects relating to the respect for the right of the timorese people to a dignified and prosperous life are particularly sensitive.

Regarding this question it is appropriate to bear in mind the addresses recently made by His Excellency the President of the Republic and the Minister for Foreign Affairs before the General Assembly of the United Nations."

b) Concerning the participation of Fretilin, it should be recalled that the ongoing talks in New York were the initiative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, to whom a mandate was given by the General Assembly, to seek avenues for a global solution to the problem of East Timor. Therefore, it is within the Secretary General's competence to decide which entities should participate in the ongoing talks in New York.

c) The Portuguese Government has developed in the past years an intense diplomatic activity towards the solution to the problem of Timor, trying to interest in the matter all States and other entities that might, in some way, contribute to that solution. The Portuguese Government has been seeking in particular international supports for the ongoing negotiation process.

d) We would like to thank the Labour Party for its efforts aimed at supporting the international iniciatives that might contribute for a solution to the problem of Timor. However, we consider that the statements of Prime Minister Hawke affirming that Australia recognizes the sovereignty of Indonesia over East Timor, as well as the understanding between the Australian Government and Djakarta over the exploitation of "Timor Gap" oil, do not contribute at present to facilitate the resolution of this question.

I remain at your disposal for any other issues concerning the problem of Timor. In the meantime, I would like to assure you my highest consideration.

Aníbal A. Cavaco Silva
Prime Minister of Portugal